

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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EO : 11652 NA

TAGS: PINT, PE

SUBJ: FORMER PRESIDENT BELAUNDE SPEAKS OUT

SUMMARY: FORMER PRESIDENT BELAUNDE HAS HELD SEVERAL PRESS INTERVIEWS SINCE RETURN TO LIMA. HE HAS CONSISTENTLY PRAISED PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ AND CRITICIZED FORMER PRESIDENT VELASCO. WHILE OFFERING TO COOPERATE IN GOP EFFORTS TO OVERCOME ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, BELAUNDE CALLS FOR A RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE AS ONLY WAY OUT OF "POLITICAL CRISIS." VEHICLE FOR THAT RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALISM SHOULD BE UNITED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT, WITH APRA AS WELL AS HIS OWN ACCION POPULAR PLAYING A LEADING ROLE. END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE HIS ARRIVAL IN LIMA JANUARY 4, FORMER PRESIDENT BELAUNDE HAS HELD PRESS INTERVIEWS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF SYMPATHETIC WEEKLY JOURNALS AND WITH FOREIGN PRESS CORPS. HE REFUSED INTERVIEWS WITH SECTORIZED PRESS OF WHICH HE IS HIGHLY CRITICAL. INTERVIEWS CONTAIN COMMENT ON SEVERAL THEMES, PRIMARILY RELATING TO POLITICAL PERSONALITIES AND THE GOVERNMENT.

2. PERSONALITIES - BELAUNDE HAS CONSISTENTLY PRAISED PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ, TERMING HIM A PRUDENT MAN WITH A GREAT SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY. ON THE OTHER HAND

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HE HAS NO KIND WORDS FOR FORMER PRESIDENT VELASCO AND

EXPRESSES PLEASURE AT VELASCO'S REMOVAL. BELAUNDE ACCUSED VELASCO OF STAGING THE 1968 COUP IN ORDER TO PREVENT AN APRA ELECTORAL VICTORY AND NOT FOR NATIONALIST OR REVOLUTIONARY PURPOSES. THE COUP, ACCORDING TO BELAUNDE, WAS THE WORK OF 12 MEN AND COULD NOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO MILITARY AS SUCH. WHEN ASKED HIS OPINION OF PRIME MINISTER-DESIGNATE FERNANDEZ MALDONADO, BELAUNDE REMARKED THAT WHEN HE WAS PRESIDENT HE HAD PROMOTED FERNANDEZ MALDONADO SEVERAL TIMES, BUT THAT IT APPEARED THAT THE MILGOV PROCESS OF SELECTING ITS TOP OFFICIALS WAS NOT FUNCTIONING WELL. BELAUNDE'S BROTHER, FRANCISCO, IN AN INTERVIEW WITH LOCAL PRESS IS SAID TO HAVE CALLED FERNANDEZ MALDONADO A TRAITOR BECAUSE OF CONTRACTS HE SIGNED WITH FOREIGN OIL COMPANIES. THAT STATEMENT DID NOT REACH PRINT. BELAUNDE HAS DISCUSSED OTHER POLITICAL LEADERS AND SINGLES OUT APRA CHIEF HAYA DE LA TORRE FOR PRAISE, CITING HIS INTELLECTUAL QUALITIES AND SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE.

3. FORM OF GOVERNMENT - ALTHOUGH BELAUNDE STATES HE IS WILLING TO COLLABORATE WITH THE GOP IN EFFORT TO RESOLVE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, HE ASSERTS THAT ONLY SOLUTION FOR DEEPENING POLITICAL CRISIS IS RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE. THE EX-PRESIDENT HAS CALLED FOR A "MOVEMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY" OR UNITED FRONT (EXCLUDING COMMUNISTS) TO LEAD THE COUNTRY BACK TO CIVILIAN RULE. HE STATED THAT A CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY COULD BE CALLED "PERHAPS WITHIN TWO YEARS". BELAUNDE IMPLIES THAT APRA WOULD PLAY MAJOR ROLE IN THE UNITED FRONT CALLING IT A "PERMANENT FORCE ROOTED IN THE MASSES". BELAUNDE DECLARED TO FOREIGN PRESS THAT PERUVIAN PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM SHOULD BE MODIFIED TO PROVIDE FOR STRENGTHENING OF PRESIDENCY ALONG LINES OF FRENCH FIFTH REPUBLIC.

4. BELAUNDE DECLARES AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY THAT ELECTIONS ARE THE ONLY LEGITIMATE EXPRESSION OF POPULAR WILL. OTHER EXPERIMENTS IN "MASS PARTICIPATION" HE TERMED "DANGEROUS", BECAUSE "WISH IT OR NOT, THEY RESULT IN A RETURN TO FASCISM WHICH, I SUPPOSE, IS NOT THE INTENTION OF THE GOVERNMENT".

5. IN OTHER PRESS COMMENT BELAUNDE CRITICIZED GOP OIL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NATIONALIZATION WHICH HE CLAIMED RESULTED IN COSTLY PER BARREL SETTLEMENT WHEN COMPARED TO RECENT VENEZUELAN ACTION. BELAUNDE HAS ALSO REFERRED TO ANGOLA AS CUBA'S VIETNAM. HE SAID CUBA WILL FACE DIFFICULT POLITICAL PROBLEMS WHEN THE NUMBER OF DEAD AND WOUNDED SOLDIERS BECOMES KNOWN THERE.

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH BELAUNDE'S STATEMENTS WERE GIVEN LITTLE PLAY IN SECTORIZED PRESS, THEY HAVE BEEN COVERED

EXTENSIVELY IN WELL-CIRCULATED WEEKLIES. HIS CALL FOR RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE SHOULD HAVE NO IMMEDIATE EFFECT BUT IF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS WORSENS SOME IN HIGH MILITARY AND GOVERNMENTAL POSITIONS MAY RECALL BELAUNDE'S STATEMENT AS WELL AS HIS HIGH REGARD FOR MORALES BERMUDEZ AND THE ARMED FORCES.

7. IN THE MEANTIME ACCION POPULAR SOURCES TELL EMBASSY THAT BELAUNDE WOULD LIKE TO BUILD UNITED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT LED BY AP AND APRA. SOURCES SAY THAT BELAUNDE IS IN CONTACT WITH HAYA DE LA TORRE AND HAS APPEALED TO HAYA'S VANITY IN EFFORT TO SPUR APRA TO GREATER POLITICAL ACTIVITY. HAYA COULD VIEW AP OVERTURE AS A LAST POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY BUT HE WILL CERTAINLY WANT TO PERSONALLY DIRECT WHATEVER UNITED FRONT EMERGES.  
DEAN

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